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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0495

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/COMJTF-B SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RULGPSU/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: HOW THE COUP IS SEEN OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL,
PART ONE: NORTH COAST POOR

Classified By: Charge d' affaires Simon Henshaw, reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Emboff who had previously lived in northern Honduras visited longstanding colleagues and friends along the North Coast to gauge opinion of citizens outside the circles of power. Emboff visited an orphanage in San Pedro Sula, a small inland town near the coastal city of Trujillo, a poor suburb of Trujillo itself, and the somewhat more prosperous coastal city of La Ceiba. These poor and working-class Hondurans were split in their views of the ouster of President Zelaya and what to do about the current political crisis. Even some of the poorest citizens expressed profound views on the crisis, however, and often in ways belying Zelaya's claims to represent the will of the poor. The clear message was that Honduras is divided, though not along economic lines as in the manner of some other "ALBA" countries. End summary.

¶2. (C) Emboff visited an orphanage for HIV positive children in San Pedro Sula. The nun who runs the orphanage was fiercely pro-Zelaya, and continued to advocate his proposed referendum to hold a constituent assembly. She expressed dismay at Cardinal Rodriguez's support for the removal of Zelaya, and said June 28 was a repeat of the theme in Latin America of the rich holding all the control against the will of the poor majority. She said the people should fight back against the coup. She said she haddrafted a statement with other nuns calling upon the Honduran people to fight for the rights of the poor, but that Cardinal Rodriguez had quashed it.

¶3. (C) In the town of Saba, outside Trujillo, Emboff visited a National Registry facility that produces ID cards and birth certificates. Of the four employees, three were pro-Zelaya and one was pro-coup. The pro-Zelaya employee's position was that he represented the true Honduran people while Micheletti represented the rich business elite, who do not care about the rest of the people.

¶4. (C) Emboff spoke with many members of a community on the outskirts of Trujillo, people who lived in dirt-floored homes with no electricity, and who fully fall into the socio-economic group Zelaya and his movement claim to represent. Not one person there expressed support for Zelaya, nor expressed support for the Micheletti regime or what happened on June 28. The prevailing opinion among the community was that Zelaya was corrupt and a bad president, but that he should have been removed through a legal process.

They universally and emphatically opposed any restoration of Zelaya as president, however. They said a Zelaya return would lead to violence, and saw successful elections in November as the solution to resolve the crisis. One interlocutor stated "We are already poor . . . we can survive six months." A comment regarding Zelaya was "I'm not educated, and I'm not well-dressed, but I think the President should be. He's the President, not a campesino."

15. (C) Comment: While the range of opinions about the events of June 28 and the Zelaya presidency were divided from group to group, and even within some communities, the universal sentiment was that their pre-existing mistrust for government and politicians had been reinforced by the current crisis. The crisis was a genuine concern for these people, but most were primarily worried about how the crisis would harm their economic well-being, in particular the potential sanctions that might be imposed on Honduras. The visit did not demonstrate a solid divide among socioeconomic lines on the crisis: while the educated and economically well-off of Honduras are heavily (though not universally) in favor of Zelaya's removal and opposed to his return, these poor communities were more divided in their positions. Where they were united was in their displeasure with the national leaders overall and their worry that the crisis and its repercussions would hurt them the most. End comment.
HENSHAW